

INDICATE CLASSIFICATION
CHARACTER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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THE PRESIDENT follows following from the President to President

Secretary's letter of October 20 to the Soviet Union

Dear Mr. President:

I have read your letter of October 20 with keen interest.

The statement with which you expressed your views on the current situation in Cuba and the need for the US in the struggle to protect the hemisphere from international intervention leads me to reply to you with equal candor.

Since my initial receipt of letters the situation which presented itself has changed considerably. Premier Khrushchev's attempt to eliminate the supervision of the offensive weapon system which the Soviet Government had established in Cuba has created a new and serious situation. There are many changes in the situation which will be worked out but if the negotiations are conducted in the same spirit which led to the Cuban Missile Crisis, I expect no major problems.

I want to stress the significance I attribute to the role of the US in this serious confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Drafted by:

ARA-EPA

Classified by:

Classified by:

ARA - Mr. Martin

Mr. Norton

Mr. Vojner

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COLOMBIA

The immediate response of the American Republics to the Soviet challenge is one of the important factors contributing to Premier Khrushchov's decision to withdraw Soviet offensive weapon systems far from our hemisphere. The nature of the action authorized in that resolution and the display of unanimity in its adoption added to its impact. Official and private reaction throughout the world attest to the influence of that historic decision on the course of events.

I regret that you found reason for apprehension and dissatisfaction in the manner in which the OAS acted in this situation. The evidence of the Soviet missile bases in Cuba was incontrovertible. I wish to confirm to you with complete frankness that the danger was imminent, and that the period of consultation which in more normal circumstances the United States has always sought to carry out with the Government of Brazil and other American governments was not possible. Even in such urgent circumstances we desired the collective judgment of the American States even though my government was engaged in the defense of its own security. We did so because of our dedication to the Organization of American States as the instrument for expression of the collective judgment of the nations of the Americas. The responsibility of the American governments to use the collective security procedures

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under the Rio Treaty to meet the threat in the most effective and expeditious manner possible was clear. Under these circumstances the OAS felt it necessary to move swiftly and boldly in defense of the peace and security of the Continent. The clear admission by Premier Khrushchev that offensive weapon systems were located in Cuba and the rapid decision to remove them confirm the wisdom of the Hemisphere's action. And I believe that this action made a substantial contribution to a peaceful solution.

While the crisis centered on the island of Cuba, I think you will agree with me that the basic issue in this particular situation was Soviet military intervention in this hemisphere. Working through our regional system we have met the direct military challenge of the Soviet Union. The insidious campaign of indirect systematic aggression which the international communist movement has been waging in our midst for many years remains with us. It is my firm purpose that the United States continue working with the other American Republics through established bodies of the OAS to maintain and strengthen our common defenses against this danger. I trust that we can count on the full measure of Brazilian cooperation in this joint endeavor.

Respectfully,
With

Very truly yours,
John F. Kennedy

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With respect to the place of Cuba within our regional system, I want to make two observations. The political system imposed on the Cuban people by the Castro regime is a matter of common concern to the other American Republics only because Cuba, under a system which continuously engages in interventionist activities against other countries, has placed itself militarily at the disposition of extra-continental powers, made itself an instrument of extra-continental intervention, and has manifestly failed to abide by the principles and obligations of our community of nations. It was on this basis that all of the American Governments agreed at Punta del Este that the Castro regime is incompatible with the Inter-American system. Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union in secretly establishing offensive military systems directed at other American Republics leaves no doubt as to the validity of that finding. What should be done about this incompatibility when it manifests itself in interventionist activities in other American countries is a matter for the American community to decide.

The second observation has to do with the principle of self-determination as it applies to Cuba. The Brazilian Government and people have recently given an exemplary demonstration of the practice of this principle in a free society.

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The people of the United States also cherish this principle, and it is a cardinal point of our foreign policy. With due regard to non-interference intervention, the Inter-American system seeks to encourage a wider understanding and practice of the principle of self-determination. I agree with you on the relevance of this principle to Cuba because of both its non-observance by the Castro regime and the failure of the Soviet Union to respect it in its relations with Cuba. We all look forward to the time when the Cuban people are permitted to express their opinion as to the leaders they wish to have and the policies they want followed. I am confident that when this happens, conditions in Cuba will change and we shall be in a position to welcome her back to the American family of nations.

Finally I should like to comment briefly on your remarks

about coexistence with socialism. While my country has achieved major social reforms under a type of private enterprise system which I would describe as economic democracy, we have maintained completely amicable and fruitful relations with countries having a wide range of economic systems and arrangements. The Organization of the Cuban economy is not the issue which has caused the rejection of Cuba by the Inter-American community. And we should not confuse economic arrangements with a political system which practices intervention, which submits itself to the policies and will of a foreign power

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to the doctrine and right of self-determination. That
rejects and destroys self-determination. That
opposed to these essential social reforms to which we
pledged ourselves in the Alliance for Progress should
also oppose the communist threat to our own right of self-
determination does not make our own opposition to world
communism less just or vital.

I appreciate having this opportunity of exchanging
views with you and hope that when I visit Brazil we shall be
able to converse further on these important matters. Sincerely,
John F. Kennedy.

In view of confidential nature of exchange of letters no
public release is desired.

END

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Transferred to O/PADRC
with additional access
controlled by S/S
Caption and custody
retained by S/S
Elian Kelly

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Department of State

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ACTION: Amembassy RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY

VERBATIM TEXT

EMBTEL 898
EYES ONLY

Please deliver following reply from President to President Goulart's letter of October 25 on Cuban crisis:

Dear Mr. President:

I have read your letter of October 25 with keen interest. The frankness with which you expressed your views on the current crisis in Cuba and the role of the OAS in the struggle to protect the hemisphere from extracontinental intervention leads me to reply to you with equal candor.

Since our initial exchange of letters the situation which prompted them has improved considerably. Premier Khrushchev's decision to dismantle under UN supervision the offensive weapon systems which the Soviet Government had established in Cuba has averted a crisis with the most grave consequences which his previous actions had created. There are many important aspects of the withdrawal still to be worked out but if these negotiations are conducted in the same spirit which led to the basic decisions, I would anticipate no major problems.

I want to stress the significance I attribute to the role of the OAS in this serious confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The immediate response of the American Republics to the Soviet challenge is one of the important factors contributing to Premier Khrushchev's decision to withdraw Soviet offensive weapon systems from our hemisphere. The nature of the action authorized in that resolution and display of unanimity in its adoption throughout the world attest to the influence of that historic decision on the course of event

I regret that you found reason for apprehension and dissatisfaction in the manner in which the OAS noted in this situation. The evidence of the Soviet missile bases in Cuba was incontrovertible. I wish to confirm to you with complete frankness that the danger was imminent, and that the period of consultation which in more normal circumstances the United States has always sought to carry out with the Government of Brazil and other American governments was not possible. Even in such urgent circumstances we desired the collective judgment of the American states even though my government was engaged in the defense of its own security. We did so because of our dedication to the Organization of American States as the instrument for expression of the collective judgment of the nations of the Americas. The responsibility of the American governments to use the collective security procedures

under the Rio Treaty to meet the threat in the most effective and expeditious manner possible was clear. Under these circumstances the OAS felt it necessary to move swiftly and boldly in defense of the peace and security of the Continent. The clear admission by Premier Khrushchev that offensive weapon systems were located in Cuba and the rapid decision to remove them confirm the wisdom of the Hemisphere's action. And I believe that this matter made a substantial contribution to a peaceful solution.

While the crisis centered on the island of Cuba, I think you will agree with me that the basic issue in this particular situation was Soviet military intervention in this hemisphere. Working through our regional systems we have met the direct military challenge of the Soviet Union. The insidious campaign of indirect aggression which the international communist movement has been waging in our midst for many years remains with us. It is my firm purpose that the United States continue working with the other American Republics through established bodies of the OAS to maintain and strengthen our common defenses against this danger. I trust that we can count on the full measure of Brazilian cooperation in this joint endeavor.

With respect to the place of Cuba within our regional system, I want to make two observations. The political system imposed on the Cuban people by the Castro regime is a matter of common concern to the other American Republics only because Cuba, under a system which continuously engages in interventionist activities against other countries, has placed itself militarily at the disposition of extra-continental powers, made itself an instrument of extra-continental intervention, and has manifestly failed to abide by the principles and obligations of our community of nations. It was on this basis that all of the American Governments agreed at Punta del Este that the Castro regime is incompatible with the inter-American system. Cuba's complicity with the Soviet Union in secretly establishing offensive military systems directed at other American Republics leaves no doubt as to the validity of that finding. What should be done about this incompatibility when it manifests itself in interventionist activities in other American countries is a matter for the American community to decide.

The second observation has to do with the principle of self-determination as it applies to Cuba. The Brazilian Government and people have recently given an exemplary demonstration of the practice of this principle in a free society.

The people of the United States also cherish this principle, and it is a central point of our foreign policy. With due regard to non-intervention, the Inter-American system seeks to encourage a wider understanding and practice of the principle of self-determination. I agree with you on the relevance of this principle to Cuba because of both its non-observance by the Castro regime and the failure of the Soviet Union to respect it in its relations with Cuba. We all look forward to the time when the Cuban people are permitted to express their opinion as to the leaders they wish to have and the policies they want followed. I am confident that when this happens, conditions in Cuba will change and we shall be in a position to welcome her back to the American family of nations.

Finally, I should like to comment briefly on your remarks about coexistence with socialism. While my country has achieved major social reforms under a type of private enterprise system which I would describe as economic democracy, we have completely amicable and fruitful relations with countries having a wide range of economic systems and arrangements. The Organization of the Cuban economy is not the issue which has caused the rejection of Cuba by the Inter-American community. And we should not confuse economic arrangements with a political system which practices intervention, which submits itself to the policies and will of a foreign power

and which rejects and destroys self-determination. That those opposed to those essential social reforms to which we had pledged ourselves in the Alliance for Progress should also oppose the communist threat to our own right of self-determination does not make our own opposition to world communism less just or vital.

I appreciate having this opportunity of exchanging views with you and hope that when I visit Brazil we shall be able to converse further on these important matters. Sincerely,
John F. Kennedy.

In view of confidential nature of exchange of letters no public release is desired.

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